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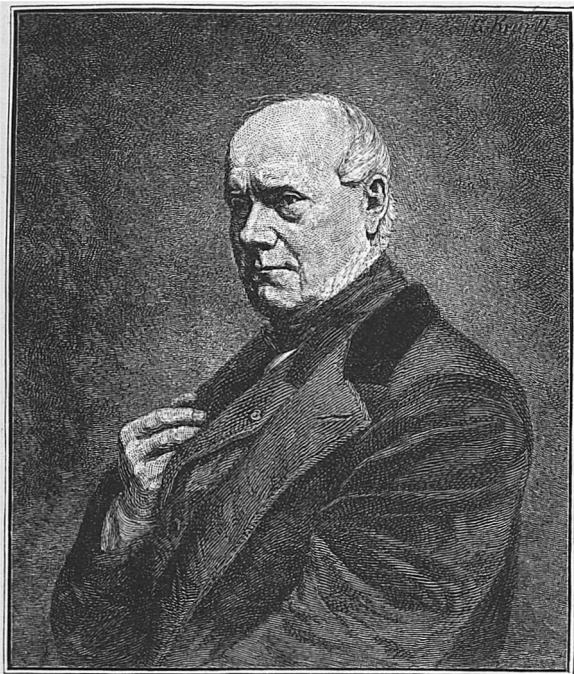
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THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COLLECTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES.

I. THE BARYE BRONZES IN THE CORCORAN GALLERY.



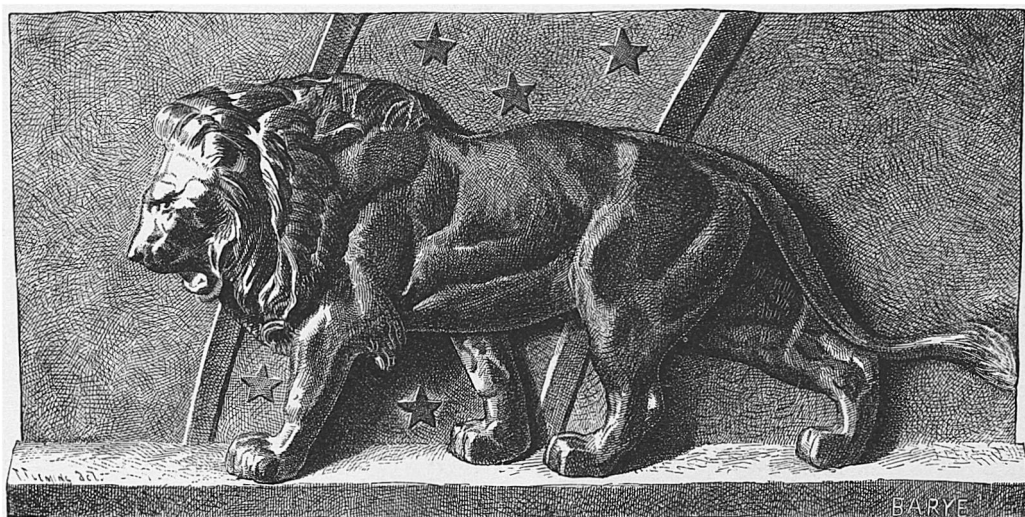
ANTOINE LOUIS BARYE.

ENGRAVED ON WOOD BY G. KRUELL, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

A REMARKABLE feature in the Corcoran Gallery of Art, at Washington, is the collection of bronzes by the late Antoine Louis Barye. Numbering one hundred and eighteen pieces, it is larger than any other known collection of Barye's works, even in Paris, and therefore offers an opportunity to study the great sculptor's style which cannot be found elsewhere. The collection was bought from the artist himself, in 1873; and, in its rich variety of groups of human figures, wild and tame animals, reptiles, birds, candelabra, &c., conveys an adequate idea of the genius of Barye,—his classic fancy, as well as his knowledge of the forms and habits of animals in repose, or when roused to fury. Though many of the pieces are small, not averaging over a foot in height, and some not larger than a paper weight, there are several of grand size, and even the most diminutive are wrought with a truthfulness and a freedom of action which make them appear larger than they really are. The illustrations to this article, limited

as they must necessarily be, have been so selected as to present types of some of the leading aspects of the artist's versatile genius.

Barye's strength lies in his intense realism,—a trait of his artistic character which is shown even in his monumental sculptures, such as the *Lion of the Column of July*, on the Place de la Bastille. This is a bas-relief, and one of the first of the works which drew general attention to the young artist. It is interesting to compare this lion with the monumental renderings of the same animal that have come down to us from antiquity, such as the well-known "Lion on the Steps of the Capitol," at Rome. Barye's bas-relief represented a new departure, which did away completely with the trammels of received conventionalism, and accepted nature pure and simple. In that massive frame of bone and muscle, ponderous, but of supple action, there is an expression of life, freedom, and truth which could not be acceptable to the official representatives of the academical French art of the time; and it is not to be wondered at, therefore, that in the year 1837 the jury refused to admit the artist's bronzes to the Salon. Barye, however, did not allow himself to be turned aside from the path which nature had marked out for him. Soon after appeared his *Lion and Serpent*, and *Lion and Horse*, in both of which the ferocity of the lion is most powerfully depicted, while in the latter we seem to hear the frenzied shriek of the victim. And so with his other beasts of prey.

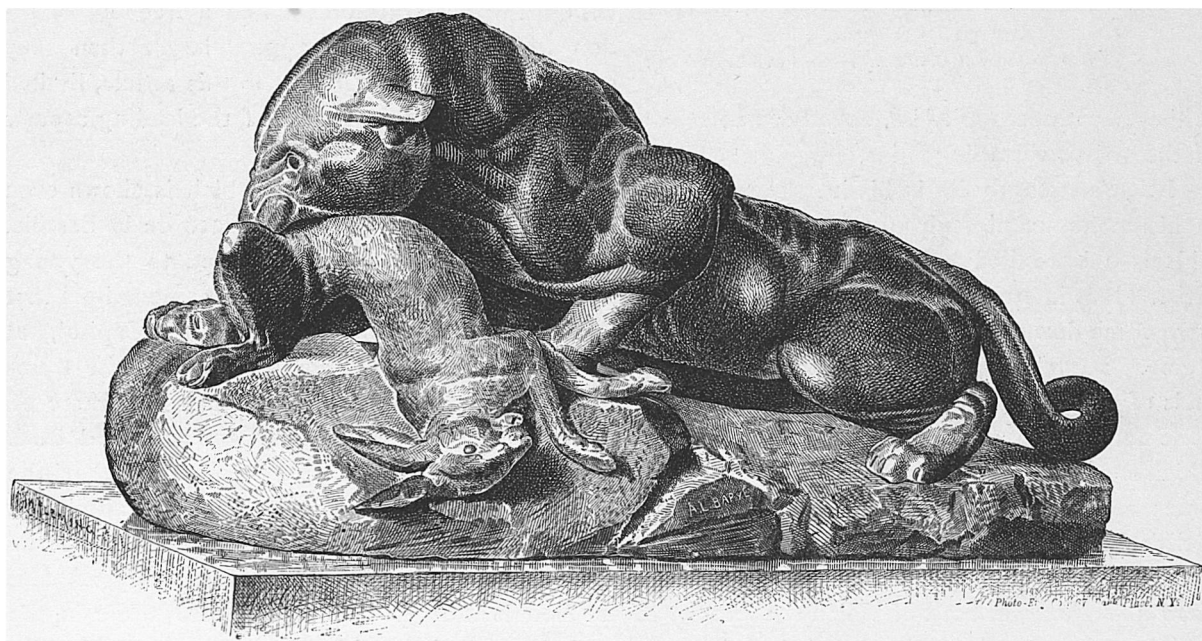


THE LION OF THE COLUMN OF JULY.

His *Tiger devouring a Crocodile* was a decided revelation in art; but his marvellous modelling of these and similar animals in ferocious action reached its climax in the *Jaguar devouring a Hare*, exhibited in plaster in 1850. A superb copy in bronze, over three feet in length, is in the Corcoran Gallery.

Among Barye's early work must also be mentioned the *Deer dragged to Earth by two Scottish Hounds*, while the *Deer biting its Side* is a wonder of skill in quickly seizing an attitude which the animal could only for a moment maintain. The *Bear and Dogs*, again, reveal a perfect mastery over the forms of both animals in fierce combat; and in the *Bear Erect*, as well as in the bronze showing Bruin on his back, playing with his toes, the artist has exhibited genuine humor.

No animal, however, figures in Barye's works in so many phases of quiet or vehement action, as the horse, whether free of harness or as the fiery steed of the Arab horseman battling with wild beasts; or bearing those fine examples of individual portraiture, the General Bonaparte, and the Duke of Orleans, or those figures endowed with knightly grace, the Gaston de Foix, and Charles VII.



JAGUAR DEVOURING A HARE.



THESEUS SLAYING THE CENTAUR.

BRONZE GROUP BY ANTOINE LOUIS BARYE.

ENGRAVED ON WOOD BY GEORGE ANDREW, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

In the two last-named works the armor and trappings are also worthy of special notice, as they give proof of the conscientious study which the artist devoted to these details in his desire for realistic truth and historical correctness. To those who know the value of a comparative study of art, it will be most interesting to compare Barye's horses with antique specimens, such as the horses in the Parthenon frieze, and the head of a horse of Hyperion, casts of which are to be found in the Hall of Antique Sculpture in the same Gallery.

Barye's fame as a sculptor rests chiefly on his animals. But his statues of historical personages, such as those just mentioned, are also of the first order, and in his compositions illustrative of mythology and legend he shows a superlative skill in the modelling of the human figure. At the

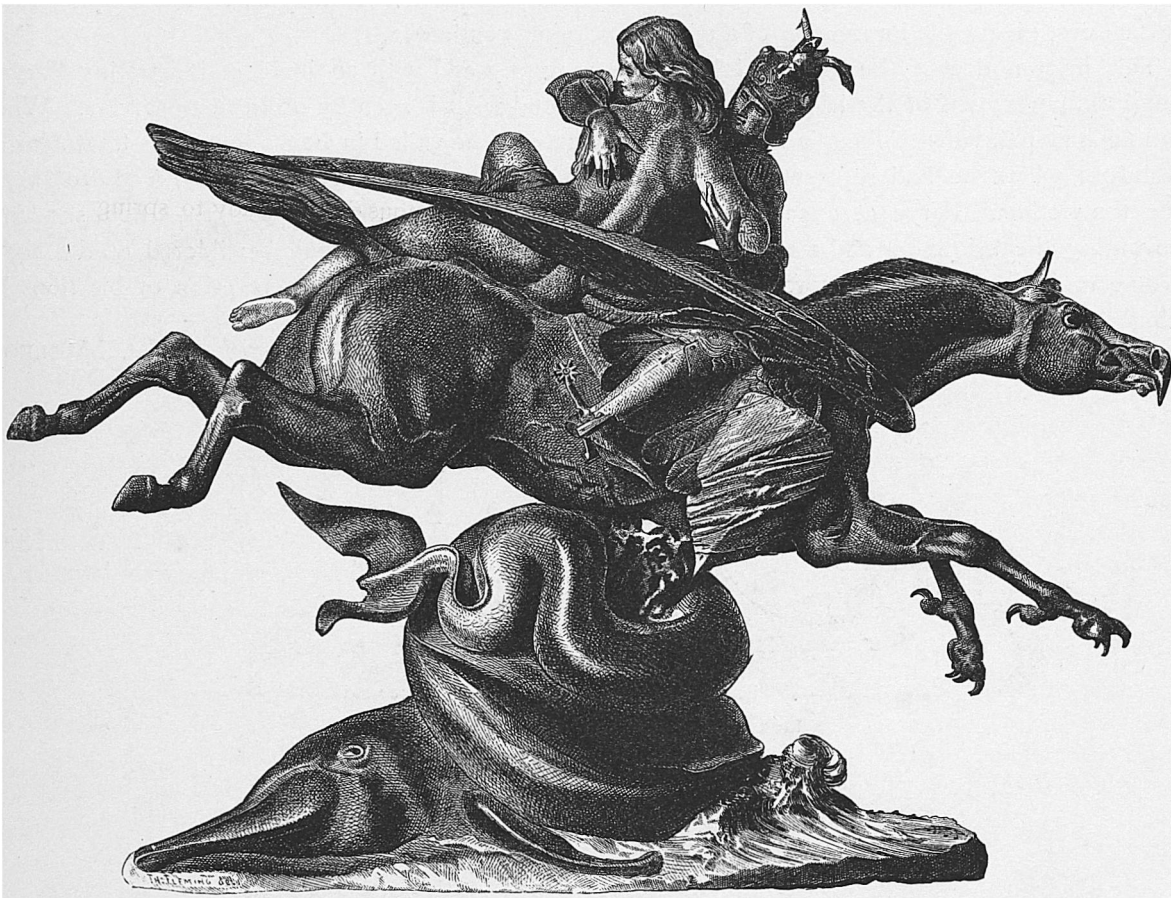


LION AND HORSE.

same time these works exhibit the versatility of his genius in a most brilliant light; for while all of them are equally realistic, the difference in the treatment of the classical subjects from that of those of a romantic nature is apparent at a glance. The grand group of *Theseus slaying the Centaur*, the largest in the collection, measuring four feet three inches by four feet, is a superb example of the artist's interpretation of classical mythology. The horse portion of the centaur (whom visitors to the Gallery may compare with the centaur in the group No. 49 in the Hall of Antique Sculpture) is sublime in its action, and quite as much so is the calm expression of the hero who, bending back the centaur's head by the throat, is about to brain him with his rude weapon. The fine genius of the sculptor in thus depicting the severity of overpowering might in the hero of his group, is also shown in *Theseus and the Minotaur*. Erect, with legs apart, and unyielding to the grasp of the monster's

thigh, he seizes the Minotaur by one ear, as he calmly thrusts the sword into his throat. In spite of all modern nervousness and realism, there is a statuesque repose, and a quietness and simplicity of contour in these groups which contrasts strangely with the restlessness and variety of sharply cutting lines in the group entitled *Roger and Angelica*. This latter is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful of Barye's works, in the production of which romance and love lent their inspiration to the artist. It is the old story of Perseus rescuing Andromeda from a sea monster, but recast in the mould of mediæval legend. Too much cannot be said in praise of this composition, of the rush of the hippogriff, and the graceful forms and poise of the heroic rescuer and his prize, all dominating the sea monster which forms the base.

The truth to nature and the power of realization shown by Barye can only be acquired by a combination of natural ability, close observation, and downright hard work, which is found only in



ROGER AND ANGELICA.

men of rarest quality. Even as a child Barye was fond of watching the animals in the Jardin des Plantes, and listening to the stories concerning their history and their habits, which were told him by an old keeper who had noticed his interest in them. Here was the inspiring source of his subsequent success; and his enthusiasm in the study of animals, which lasted nearly to the close of his life, is made evident by the true story of a visitor, who, having vainly called several times at his house to see him, was finally told that, a new tiger having been received at the Jardin, the artist had not been home for a fortnight.

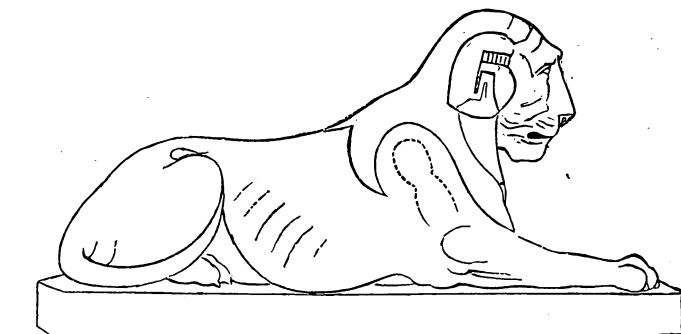
Barye always gave the finishing touch to his works, returning to the factory all the copies which were unsatisfactory to him. Their vigorous modelling has sometimes been mistaken for want of finish; but Barye aimed to give to the surface a texture suggestive of the skin and hair of animals, so that there is a certain naturalness in his works, even to the touch. The variety in the productions of this artist is truly astonishing, and reminds one of the work done by some of the old artists. He

modelled animals, statues, vases, candelabra, and other utensils; made designs for all sorts of industrial objects, among them a beautiful clock for M. Pereire; decorated several façades; lithographed, etched, and painted in water-colors. Of the latter class of works, strong in drawing and sombre in color, there are quite a number in American private collections.

Barye was born at Paris in 1796, of poor parents, and died in 1875, full of honors, as the first animal sculptor of France. He studied engraving under Fourier, modelling under Bosio, drawing under Gros, and gave much attention to practical anatomy. During half his career he struggled for subsistence, and was not famous until near his fiftieth year, when his genius was fully recognized, and he was appointed Professor of Animal Drawing at the Jardin des Plantes. The story, however, that he was for years forced to hawk his wares about the streets of Paris, is not true, and probably grew out of his simple habits. Without a particle of pride, he did not hesitate to be his own porter, and frequently carried his bronzes in person to the houses of purchasers. In manner he was simple, grave, and taciturn, giving the impression of a quiet, observing gentleman.

This brief notice of the man and his works may fitly end with an incident illustrating Barye's thoughtful perception of the instincts of animals, beyond what is seen by ordinary observers. When Gérôme had painted the lions in his "Christian Martyrs," he called in Barye to see his treatment of the beasts, which he had represented as just released, with eager, ravenous looks, ready to spring upon the victims. Barye at once said that it was not natural, — that the hungriest lion, suddenly confronting the bright air and a crowded arena, would hesitate, and recoil bewildered at the sight. Gérôme took the hint, and always met the compliments upon the fine conception of his lions by giving the merit to Barye.

WM. MACLEOD.



LION ON THE STEPS OF THE CAPITOL, ROME.

LANDSCAPE AND SHEEP.

PAINTED BY CHARLES JACQUE. ETCHED BY JAMES D. SMILLIE.

(From the Collection of August Belmont, Esq., New York.)



THE admirable etching which Mr. James D. Smillie, of New York, has made from the Jacque in the Belmont Gallery, with the courteous consent of the owner, conveys a very adequate idea of the general characteristics of the artist, as well as of the special qualities of this example of his work. Mr. Smillie has, indeed, before given proof of his ability to enter into the spirit of the work of other artists, — a quality much rarer, and of much greater value, than is generally supposed, — but this is the first time that he has shown his powers as a reproductive etcher. Specimens of Mr. Smillie's original etchings will be laid before the readers of the REVIEW hereafter. In a subsequent number a full description, accompanied by further illustrations, will also be given of the well-known collection of which the painting here reproduced forms a part.

S. R. K.